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ABSTRACT

Although the concept of "community" has been defined in many ways, it generally encompasses subgroups that provide emotional and common-interest ties as well as a sense of subjective wholeness. This paper provides a brief chronology on community within American life and the influence of ideals arising from this history. A look at ethnographic portrayals of different contemporary communities and their ways of socializing members includes a Puerto Rican area of Manhattan (New York), a Japanese area in California, a community of black Americans in the southern United States, and two communities created by programs for adolescents and homeless youth. Ethnographers learn about groups by becoming participants and observers in those groups. All of these portrayals also include subtexts of members' collective views of learning through formal and informal education. Implications of current community life, where the community is not necessarily spatially defined, for the future of research, policy, and practice in multicultural education are discussed. (Contains 91 references.) (SLD)

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